

Testimony of Katja Sieling, Stonington High School Student

Good evening Co-Chair Gerrantana, Co-Chair Dillon, Co-Chair Somers, and sub-committee members. My name is Katja Sieling and I am a Junior at Stonington High School. I am thoroughly invested in the Adolescent Learning & Leadership Institute (ALLI) that was created by Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC) and have participated since my Freshman year of High School. ALLI has inspired me to learn more about my potential in changing the community; which lead me to give up Summer vacation time to attend multi-state Youth2Youth High School prevention conference for the last 2 years. I applied and earned SERAC scholarships and would have missed out on these life changing opportunities if it wasn't for SERAC. Please reconsider slashing the funding for the critical youth development work of Regional Action Councils. This small investment has proven to show it's worth throughout our lifetime.

Because of SERAC, I have been given the wonderful opportunity to be wholeheartedly involved in the Adolescent Learning Leadership Institute (ALLI), finding my passion in substance prevention work. Because of the efforts extended from ALLI through SERAC, I've been able to receive training in tobacco education to them being to the younger schools of my district, attend summer leadership conferences, and begin to bring prevention work into my high school.

These opportunities mean everything to me. It's why I have decided to pursue a career in clinical pharmacy and dedicate myself to community involvement in prevention methods. SERAC and ALLI have given me the guidance and passion to work to better my community in areas such as gambling (I live close to Foxwoods & Mohegan Sun), prescription abuse, illicit drugs and other areas of concern for my peers.

Myself, as well as many of my peers in ALLI found great worth in the work that SERAC and other RAC's do within Connecticut. Please do not cut the RACS; give others the opportunity to find themselves, like I have, through SERAC's youth development and prevention programs.

Sincerely,

Katja Sieling